

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 217. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 1873.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## WILLING TO DIE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE ROSE AND THE KEY."

### CHAPTER XXXVIII. STORM.

A FEW days later, mamma and I were talking in the drawing-room, when the door opened and papa came in, his umbrella in his hand and his hat on his head, looking as white as death. He stood for a time without speaking. We were both staring in his face, as dumb as he.

"Droqville's a villain!" he said, suddenly. "They have got that miserable old fool's money—every guinea. I told you how it would be, and now it has happened!"

"What has happened?" asked mamma, still gazing at him, with a look of terror. I was myself freezing with horror. I never saw despair so near the verge of madness in a human face before as in papa's.

"What? We're ruined! If there's fifty pounds in the bank it's all, and only that between us and nothing."

"My God!" exclaimed mamma, whiter than ever, and almost in a whisper.

"Your God! What are you talking about? It is you that have done it all—filling the house with priests and Jesuits. I knew how it would be, you fool!"

Papa was speaking with the sternness of actual fury.

"I'm not to blame; it is not my doing. Frank, for Heaven's sake don't speak so, you'll drive me mad. I don't know what they have done—I don't understand it!" cried mamma, and burst into a helpless flood of tears.

"You may as well stop that crying. You can do it in the streets by-and-bye. Understand it? By Heaven, you'll understand it well enough before long. I hope you may, as you deserve it!"

With those dreadful looks, and a voice hoarse with passion, poor papa strode out of the room, and we heard him shut the hall-door after him with a crash.

We were left with the vaguest ideas of the nature of our misfortune; his agitation was so great as to assure me that an alarming calamity had really befallen us.

Mamma cried on. She was frightened by his evident alarm, and outraged by his violence, so shocking in one usually so gay, gentle, and serene. She went up to her room to cry there, and to declare herself the most miserable of women.

Her maid gave her *sal volatile*, and I seeing no good or comfort in my presence, ran down to the drawing-room.

I had hardly got into the room, when whom should I see arriving at the door in a cab, with some papers in his hand, but Mr. Forrester, papa's principal attorney.

I knew papa was out; and I was so afraid of his attorney's going away without giving us any light on the subject of our alarms, that I ran down-stairs, and told the servant to show him into the dining-room, and on no account to let him go away. I went into the room myself, and there awaited him.

In came Mr. Forrester, and looked surprised at finding me only.

"Oh, Mr. Forrester!" I said, going quickly to him, and looking up in his eyes, "what is this about Lady Lorrimer, and, are we quite ruined?"

"Ruined?" he repeated. "Oh, dear, not at all," and he threw a cautionary glance toward the door, and lowered his voice a little. "Why should you be ruined? It's only a disappointment. It has been very artfully done, and I was only this moment at the Temple talking the will over with one of the best men at the Bar, to whom I'm to send a brief, though I can't

see, myself, any good that is likely to come of it. Everything has been done, you see, under the best possible advice, and all the statutes steered clear of. Her estates were all turned into money—that is, the reversions sold—two years ago. The whole thing is very nearly a quarter of a million, all in money, and the will declares no trust—a simple bequest. I haven't the slightest hope of any case on the ground of undue influence. I dare say she was, in the meaning of the law, a perfectly free agent; and if she was not, depend upon it we shall never find it out."

"But does it do us any particular injury?" I inquired, not understanding one sentence in three that he spoke.

"Why, no injury, except a disappointment. In the natural course of things all this, or the bulk of it, might very likely have come to you here. But only that. It now goes elsewhere; and I fear there is not the least chance of disturbing it."

"Then we are not ruined?" I repeated.

He looked at me, as if he were not quite sure of my meaning, and, with a smile, answered:

"You are not a bit worse off than you were a year ago. She might have left you money, but she could take nothing from you. You have property at Cardyllion, I think, a place called Malory, and more at Golden Friars, and other things beside. But your country solicitors would know all about those things."

And thus having in some measure reassured me, he took his leave, saying he would go to papa's clubs to look for him.

I ran up to mamma, more cheerful than when I had left her. She also was cheered by my report, and being comforted on the immediate subject of her alarm, she began to think that his excitement was due to some fresh disappointment in his electioneering projects, and her resentment at his ill-temper increased.

This was the evening of papa's political dinner-party. A gentleman's party strictly it was to be, and he did not choose to allow poor Aunt Lorrimer's death to prevent it. Perhaps he was sorry now that he had not postponed it; but it was too late to think of that.

We were very near the close of the session. The evenings were perceptibly shortening. I remember every particular connected with that evening and night, with a sharp precision.

Papa came in at dusk. He ran up-stairs, and before dressing he came into mamma's

bedroom, where I was sitting at her bedside. He looked tired and ill, but was tranquil comparatively now.

"Never mind, May," he said; "it will all come right, I dare say. I wish this dinner was not to be till to-morrow. They are talking of putting me up for Dawling. One way or other, we must not despair yet. I'll come up and see you when they go away. We are a small party—only nine, you know—and I don't think there are two among them who won't be of very real use to me. If I get in I don't despair. I have been very low before, two or three times, and we've got up again. I don't see why we shouldn't now, as we did before."

Judging by his looks, you would have said that papa had just got out of a sick-bed, pale, ill, haggard.

He looked at his watch; it was later than he thought, and he went away. We heard him ring for his man, and presently the double knocks began at the hall-door, and his party were arriving.

Mamma was not very well, and whenever she was, or fancied herself, ill, papa slept in another bedroom, adjoining hers, with a dressing-room off it.

Ours was a large house, handsomer than would naturally have fallen to our lot; it had belonged to my grandfather, Lord Chellwood, and when he built the new house in Blank-street he settled this upon his younger son.

Mamma and I had some dinner in her room, and some tea there also. She had got over her first alarm. Papa's second visit had been reassuring, and she took it very nearly for granted that, after some harassing delays, and possibly a good deal of worry, the danger, whatever it was, would subside, as similar dangers had subsided before, and things would run again in their accustomed channel.

It was a very animated party; we could hear the muffled sound of their talking and laughing from the drawing-room, where they were now taking their tea and coffee, and talking, as it seemed, nearly all together.

At length, however, the feast was ended, the guests departed, and papa, according to promise, came up-stairs, and, with hardly a knock at the door, came in.

Had he been drinking more than usual? I don't know. He was in high spirits. He was excited, and looked flushed, and talked incessantly, and laughed ever so much at what seemed to me very indifferent jokes.

I tried to edge in a question or two about the election matters, but he did not seem to mind, or even to hear what I said, but rattled and laughed on in the same breathless spirits.

"I'm going to bed now," he said, suddenly. "I have ever so much to do to-morrow, and I'm tired. I shall be glad when this thing is all ended."

Mamma called after him, "But you did not bid us good-night." The candle, however, vanished through the second bedroom into the dressing-room, and we heard him shut the door.

"He did not hear," said mamma; "his head is so full of his election. He seems very well. I suppose everything will be right, after all."

So mamma and I talked on for a little; but it was high time that she should settle to rest. I kissed her, and away I went to my own room.

There my maid, as she brushed my hair, told me all the rumours of the servants' hall and the housekeeper's room about papa's electioneering prospects; all promised great things, and, absurd as these visions were, there was something cheering in listening to them. It was past twelve by the time my maid left me.

Very shortly after I heard a step come to my door, and papa asked, "Can I come in, dear, to say a word?"

"Oh yes; certainly, papa," I answered, a little curious.

"I won't sit down," he said, looking round the room vaguely. He laid his candle on my table; he had a small box in his hand, in which mamma had told me he kept little lozenges of opium, his use of which had lately given her a great deal of secret uneasiness. "I have found it all out. It was that villain Droquville who did it all. He has brought us very low—broken my heart, my poor child!" He heaved a great sigh. "If that woman had never lived, if we had never heard of her, I should not have been so improvident. But that's all over. You must read your Bible, Ethel; it is a good book; there's something in it—something in it. That governess, Miss Grey, was a good woman. I say you are young; you're not spoiled yet. You must read a little bit every night, or I'll come and scold you. Do you mind? You look very well, Ethel. You must not let your spirits down—your courage. I wish it was morning. All in good time. Get to sleep, darling. Good-night, good-bye." He kissed me on the cheek and departed.

I was soon fast asleep. I think the occurrences of the earlier part of the day had made me nervous. I awoke with a start, and a vague consciousness of having been in the midst of an unpleasant dream. I thought I heard mamma call me. I jumped out of bed, threw my dressing-gown about me, and, with bare feet, walked along the lobby, now quite dark, toward mamma's door. When I got almost to it I suddenly recollected that I could not have heard mamma's voice in my room from hers. In total darkness, solitude, and silence, I experienced the sort of chill which accompanies the discovery of such an illusion. I was just turning about, to make a hasty retreat to my own room, when I did hear mamma's voice. I heard her call papa's name, and then there was a silence.

I changed my mind. I went on, and tapped at her door.

Rather nervously she asked, "Who's there?" And on hearing me answer, told me to come in.

There was only the night-light she usually had burning in her room. She was sitting up in her bed, and told me she had been startled by seeing papa looking in at the door (she nodded toward the one that opened to his bedroom). The night-light was placed on a little table close beside it.

"And oh! my dear Ethel, he looked so horribly ill I was frightened; I hardly knew him, and I called to him, but he only said, 'That's enough,' and drew back, and shut the door. He looked so ill, that I should have followed him in, but I found the door locked, and I heard him shut the door of his dressing-room; do you think he is ill?"

"Oh! no, mamma; if he had been ill he'd have told you so; I'm sure it was the miserable light in this room; everything looks so strange in it." And so with a few words more we bid good-night once again; and, having seen her reclining with her head on her pillow, I made my way back again to my own room.

I felt very uncomfortable; the few words mamma had said presented an image that somehow was mysterious and ill-omened. I held my door open and listened with my head stretched into the dark. Papa's dressing-room door was nearly opposite. I was reassured by hearing his step on the floor; then I heard something moved; I closed my own door once more, and got into bed.

The laws of acoustics are, I believe, well ascertained; and, of course, they never vary. But their action, I confess, has often puzzled me.

In the house where I now write, there are two rooms separated only by a narrow passage, in one of which, under a surgical operation, three dreadful shrieks were uttered, not one of which was, even faintly, heard in the other room, where two near and loving relations awaited the result in the silence and agony of suspense.

In the same way, but not so strikingly, because the interposing space is considerably greater, no sound was ever heard in mamma's room, from papa's dressing-room, when the doors were shut. But from my door, when the rest of the house was silent, you could very distinctly hear a heavy step or any other noise in that room.

My visit to mamma's room had, as nurses say, "put my sleep astray," and I lay awake until I began to despair of going to sleep again till morning. From my meditations in the dead silence, I was suddenly startled by a sound like the clapping of the dressing-room door with one violent clang.

I jumped up again; I thought I should hear papa's step running down the stairs; and all my wild misgivings returned. I put my head out at the door and listened. I heard no step; nothing stirring. Once more in my dressing-gown I stole out; his candle was still burning, for I saw a ray of light slanting toward the lobby floor from the keyhole of his room, with the motes quivering in it. It pointed like a wand to something white that lay upon the ground. I remembered that this was the open leaf of the old Bible—too much neglected book, alas! in our house—that had fallen from its little shelf on the lobby, and which I had been specially moved to replace as I passed it an hour or two before, seeing, in my superstitious mood, omens in all things. Hurried on, however, by mamma's voice calling me, I had not carried out my intention.

"Dislodged from your place, you may be," I now thought as I stooped to take the book in my hand; "but never to be trampled on!"

I was interrupted by a voice, a groan, I thought, from inside the dressing-room.

I was not quite certain; staring breathlessly at the door, I listened; no sound followed. I stepped to the door and knocked. No answer came. With my lips close to the door, and my hand upon the handle I called, "Papa, papa, papa!" I was frightened, I pushed open the door, and hesitated. I called again, "Papa—answer, answer; are you there, papa?" I was calling upon silence. With a little effort I stepped in.

The candle was burning on the table; there was a film of blue smoke hovering in the air; a faint smell of burning. I saw papa lying on the floor; he seemed to have dropped from the arm-chair, and to have fallen over on his back; a pistol lay by his half-open hand; the side of his face looked black and torn as if a thunderbolt had scorched him, and a stream of blood seemed throbbing from his ear.

The smell of powder, the smoke, the pistol on the ground, told what had happened. Freezing with terror, I screamed the words, "Papa, papa; oh! God! speak. He's killed!" I was on my knees beside him; he was not quite dead. His eyes were fixed in the earnest stare of the last look, and there was a faint movement of the mouth as if he were trying to speak. It was only for a few seconds. Then all motion ceased; his jaw fell; he was dead.

I staggered back against the wall, uttering a frightful scream.

Under excitement so tremendous as mine, people, I think, are more than half spiritualised. We seem to find ourselves translated from place to place by thought rather than effort.

It seemed to me only a second after I had left that frightful room, that I stood beside Miss Pouden's bed up-stairs. She slept with not only her shutters, but the window open. It was so perfectly silent, the street as well as the house, that through the wall from the nursery next door, I could faintly hear a little baby crying. The moonlight shone dazzlingly on the white curtains of Miss Pouden's bed. I shook her by the shoulder, and called her; she started up, and I remember the odd effect of her wide open eyes, lighted by the white reflection, and staring from the shadow at me with a horror that she caught from my looks.

"Merciful heaven! Miss Ware—my dear child—why are you here? What is it?"

"Come with me; we must get help; papa is dreadfully hurt, in the dressing-room; mamma knows nothing of it; don't say a word as you pass her door."

Together we went down; steadily drawing toward the awful room, from which we saw, at the end of the dark passage, the faint flush of the candle fall on the carpet.

When I told Miss Pouden what had happened, nothing would induce her to come with me beyond the lobby. I had to go into the room alone; I had to look in to be sure that he was actually dead. Oh!



it was appalling, incredible. I, Ethel Ware, looking at my handsome, gay, good-natured father, killed by his own hands, the smoke of the fatal shot not yet quite cleared away! Why was there no pitying angel near to call me but a minute earlier? My tap at the door would have arrested his hand, and the moment of temptation would have passed harmlessly by. All too late; for time and eternity all is irretrievable now. One glance was sufficient. I could not breathe; I could not, for some dreadful moments, withdraw my eyes. With a faint cry, I stepped backward. I was trembling violently as I asked Miss Pouncden to send any one of the servants for Sir Jacob Lake, and to tell whoever was going not to leave his house without him.

I waited in the drawing-room while she went down, and I heard her call to the servants over the stairs. The message was soon arranged, and the messenger gone. I had not cried all this time; I continued walking quickly about the drawing-room with my hands clenched together, talking wildly to myself, and to God.

When Miss Pouncden returned, I implored of her not to leave me.

"Come up to my room; we'll wait there till Sir Jacob Lake comes. Mamma must not know it; except as he advises. If she learned it too suddenly, she would lose her mind."

### BORGIA IN THE KITCHEN.

PROFESSORS of optimism to the contrary notwithstanding—there are some serious disadvantages in living in this severely practical age. Every day some sweet and time-honoured tradition either shrivels into dry prose before the cold blast of criticism, or is cast off bodily like a serpent's skin, that some new and unwholesome truth may wriggle into scaly life. The "tale of Troy divine," in spite of Homer, is very decidedly under a cloud. Romulus and Remus, the she-wolf foster-mother, Tarquin, Lucretia, and early Roman history generally, came to grief several years ago. Alfred the Great as a baker of cakes is—to the despair of the British artist—fallen into discredit; the beautiful story of Eleanor sucking the poison from her husband's wound has been demolished by some disbeliever in feminine devotion; Robin Hood has had his bull's-eye put out; Little John is clean gone, quarter-staff and all; Friar Tuck is very naught. Even the beaver of Gessler

has been knocked into a "shocking bad hat," and the old established firm of W. Tell and Son has at last gone into the Gazette, and the whole of the stories of Tell and the apple have been "boiled down" into some Aryan myth about the Sun-god, difficult to understand, and uninteresting when understood. It is fortunate, however, that the old house lasted Schiller's and Rossini's time, or the world of art might have lost two of its most splendid monuments. Nursery tales have been treated as roughly as folk-lore. Jack in the Beanstalk has been shown up as a ruthless adventurer, and Bluebeard's blue room has been ascribed to the invention of his wife's family, who wanted some excuse for knocking the unfortunate and much-married gentleman on the head. The terror of Miss Muffet on the appearance of the spider has been treated with derision, and persons of an inquiring turn of mind ask to be informed what a "tuffet" may be? Little Jack Horner has been terribly mauled. Professor Windbeutel declares that the whole narrative is hopelessly confused, and that the character of Horner sets analysis at defiance. "How," asks Windbeutel, "do you reconcile these contradictions? Horner exults in his personal courage when he has only just given a never-to-be-forgotten proof of cowardice by slinking into the corner to consume his pie. Moreover, by his pulling out a plum, it could not have been a pie at all, but was most probably a Christmas pudding." Beauty and the Beast have also suffered at the hands of Windbeutel, who insists that the whole story is an allegory upside down, as it is absurd to suppose that princes, or indeed any men, show their rough side during courtship, much preferring to defer such exhibition to the post-matrimonial period. Animals have been ill-treated in like manner, and our old friend the sea-serpent cannot succeed in inspiring confidence. Natural history has shown the tiger to be wholly brave, and the king of beasts, the lordly lion, an arrant coward, and now chemistry steps in to abolish the harmless necessary cat. Whittington and the Marquis de Carabas will avail but little, for I fear it is all over with poor Pussy. She is no longer necessary, and her pretty purrings and little coaxing ways will stand her in but little stead now that she is no longer wanted as a destroyer of rats and mice. For long ages Pussy's little oddities and petty prurlonings of all sorts of things—from coals to raspberry

jam—have been condoned on the ground that she did less mischief than would rats and mice when left in undisturbed possession of the house. Her peculiar ways, and a certain untamable quality inherent in her have been endured, for she was “an excellent mouser.” Her midnight serenades have been patiently undergone on the ground that a feline serenade is a lesser nuisance than an army of rats skirmishing about the floor: and even her almost political adherence to place rather than to person, has been excused for the reason that no consideration was sufficiently powerful to wean her from her favourite hunting-grounds. But the doom of Pussy is sealed. She is not to be supplanted by the ichneumon, nor even by tame snakes, but by a more potent and insidious rival. The chemist is abroad, and the sneaking practice of poisoning those rodents, who are so unfortunate as to rank as vermin, is openly advocated.

Crude efforts have for many years past been made in this direction. Ingenious but depraved people have been in the habit of mixing meal with plaster of Paris, placing the abominable compound in the rats’ runs, and treacherously putting water near it, in order that the unfortunate animals, already suffering from the pangs of thirst, might assuage their tortures by imbibing the fatal fluid, and thereby form small plaster images in their unfortunate stomachs. But this mean style of assassination met with its just reward. The rats crawled into their holes, or sank down behind the wainscoting, and horrible odours soon drove the shabby assassin either to the whips of the house-agent or the scorpions of the carpenter. I have no sympathy with Borgia, as I have no very great personal objection to the cheerful and frisky rat, for

The lively rodent never injured me.

Occupying, some years ago, a suite of rooms in University-place, New York City, I was much diverted by the antics of the rats, who were constantly skirmishing about my sleeping-rooms. I could not avoid fancying that they had done me the honour to select my rooms as a convenient spot for holding athletic meetings and other events of a like sporting character. They got up flat races in my sitting-room—three times round the hearth-rug and a distance—and entered themselves for steeplechases among the fire-irons, thereby, as my landlady remarked, raising Cain. The noise

became at last intolerable, and in a fit of fury, very unusual in one of my eminently pacific disposition, I proposed to the landlady aforesaid—a gorgeous lady in velvet and diamonds, privately married to a six-foot policeman—to pass my leisure evenings in picking off the rats with my revolver. But my landlady pleaded her carpet, and other “fixings,” and my truculent fit having worn itself out, I was fain to subside into calm acquiescence with the riotous proceedings of my four-footed neighbours. By degrees I became weak enough to leave odds and ends of biscuit on the table, and on moonlit nights it was pretty to see my little protégés clambering up the table-cloth at racing pace, and most amusing to witness the scimmages that took place anent the equitable division of the booty. A heartless friend recommended me to keep a cat; but I know Pussy. She is always wanting to get into bed if at home on cold nights, and on fine evenings has too many calls to make on her friends and acquaintances. In the matter of cats I—like Handel in the matter of wine—like other people’s, and, having to choose between rats and cats, I preferred the rats.

My kindly feelings towards the rodent family being borne in mind, my horror may be imagined at beholding, a few days since, the advertisement of a so-called vermin killer, having for its trade mark one of the most heartless cartoons that it has ever been my ill-fortune to behold.

In the foreground was depicted an unfortunate mouse laid out cold and stiff, while another poor innocent in the rear was apparently describing a back summersault as a preliminary to his dissolution; to add to the horror of the scene, two rats were discovered apparently discussing the catastrophe with gloomy faces, and hesitating as to the advisability of partaking of refreshment under such suspicious circumstances. Stung by curiosity, I invested threepence in a packet of the vermin killer, and having carefully disposed of a hideous grey powder contained therein, proceeded to study the printed directions, evidently compiled by some wily wretch, whose hatred of the rodentia was only equalled by his ignorance of the English language. Purchasers are requested to “sprinkle a little of the killer on a piece of bread well buttered” (observe the diabolical insidiousness of this procedure), “pass a knife over the surface so as to mix the killer well with the butter on the bread, particularly round the edges” (note the treachery of this),

"lay the pieces of bread-and-butter in the places most frequented by the mice at night, and in the morning they will be usually found attracted to the killer as by magic, and be found dead near it."

Not satisfied with murder on a small scale, our Brinvilliers next proceeds to wholesale slaughter.

"To destroy mice in stacks: Mix a shilling packet" (mark the commercial element here) "of the killer, which will usually be sufficient for a fair-sized stack, for one dressing, with about two ounces of nice sweet lard" (Aha! Judas) "carefully mixed on the back of a plate with a clean knife, then put bits of this, the size of a small bean, into pieces of clean white paper, about the size of the one on which this direction is printed; twist the four corners together to avoid wasting the killer" (economical Tofana!); "let these bits of paper be thrust into the runs," &c.

It would seem that Borgia has an easy time of it with the poor little mice, who throw back summersaults, and die on the spot; but he finds the rat a more difficult prey, and is compelled to approach that astute animal by regular parallels, and to pay him all the honour of a siege in due form. We are told in a sentence, sublimely indifferent to Lindley Murray, that "Rats are more cautious than mice what they eat, and must be tempted two or three nights with what it is intended to mix the killer."

The wily rat must be tempted, and Borgia proceeds to develop his scheme of assassination.

"If oatmeal is used, place near their runs for two or three nights a little fine Scotch oatmeal tied in white paper; if they take this, then mix a shilling packet of the killer with two ounces of the oatmeal."

It would seem that rats are particularly apt to smell one of their own race, for they do not always gobble the carefully prepared bait. In this case, we are told to keep on—of course buying shilling packets of the killer all the time—and try "fish, liver, or raw meat as a bait, cut very small, nearly minced; as soon as they are found to eat the bait, mix a little of the killer with what they are found to eat best." I am glad to find that the rat is no easy victim. In spite of treacherous and systematic attempts to lull him into a sense of fancied security, he often detects the lurking poison, and declines the cruel kindness of the killer. Moreover—for murder will out—we are informed that "Rats usually die in their holes," and thus avenge themselves

on their sneaking enemies by poisoning the atmosphere of the abode of Borgia.

It is comforting, from my point of view, to find that, even from a commercial point of view, Borgia is far from having it all his own way. There are "bogus" Borgias in the field who imitate his powder, his cartoon, and his printed directions, grammar and all. Bogus Borgia recommends fish as the best medium for insinuating his abominable powder; but in other particulars is a mere slavish imitator of the original poisoner. The same treacherous method of gradual temptation is recommended by the younger, as by the elder criminal, the same cold-blooded satisfaction is shown at the sudden death of the harmless mouse, and the same difficulties are confessed to exist in the case of the subtle rat. Melancholy, indeed (again from the point of view of a friend to rats), are the mean attempts of these assassins, who not alone have ruined a highly important outlet for human ingenuity—the invention of mouse-traps—but have reduced poor Pussy to the humiliating confession that her "occupation's gone."

## THE FORMS OF WATER.

### MIST AND RAIN.

WITHOUT air to breathe when brought into the world, we could only continue to live a few seconds; but without water, we could not even come to life; we could not be organised, nor grow up to the point at which breathing becomes necessity. Water we are, and to water we return, quite as much as dust we are, and to dust return. Water is, therefore, even a more primary and indispensable element of our existence than air, if it were possible to make a comparison between two absolute indispensabilities.

We know air in one form only. It is more or less dense or rare; more or less devoid of colour, according to its slight or considerable depth; more or less laden with foreign substances, as smoke, dust, invisible vapour, visible fogs; more or less perceptible to our senses, through its variations of heat or cold, unfelt calm, or destructive and irresistible motion. But it is always the same light, transparent, elastic fluid, and it defies us to change it into anything else. If we decompose air into the elements of which it is a mixture, they still remain, like itself, æriform, gaseous, or air-like.

Water, on the contrary (besides being

compounded of elements which, unlike itself, are never either liquid or solid), puts on more dissimilar shapes than were ever attributed to the fabled Proteus. A fall in temperature of only half a degree will change the yielding liquid into a rigid solid. Nor are its diverse forms cosmopolitan in their assumption and appearance. Not everybody has the privilege of beholding them.

Millions of our fellow-creatures live and die without ever having seen hail, snow, or ice. Millions more never gaze on a glacier during their whole allowance of three score years and ten. If, by good luck, they catch sight of one, it impresses them with a new sensation, and, if they be not "duller than the fat weed that roots itself in ease on Lethæ wharf," inspires them with new ideas.

There are whole tribes and nations of men to whom the ocean is a thing unknown. Dwellers on extensive alluvial plains have to take their notions of a waterfall from a lock or a mill weir. The great American fresh-water lakes—their aspect, phenomena, fish, and birds—are separated from us by a hemisphere.

There are regions where the form which water takes when we witness its balloon performances, in the shape of a passing cloud, is a marvel and a rarity. One of Captain Marryat's sailors joyously hails the black squall he meets in the Channel because it is "no more of your d—d blue skies." Rain is most partially and unequally distributed. There is a spot near Bangor, in Wales, where it rains more or less every day in the year. Another, in Borrowdale, competes with its rainfall. At Perpignan, chief town of the Oriental Pyrenees, France, it rains so seldom that when the phenomenon does occur little boys and girls call each other out to see it, and catch the drops on their inquisitive tongues.

In the Pampas there occur long droughts which, Mr. Darwin was told, are almost periodical, the interval being about fifteen years. Note here that Mr. G. J. Symons calls attention to the periodicity of wet seasons in the United Kingdom. A few years since any one who expressed belief in the periodicity of meteorological phenomena received more criticism than credit. Not being much afraid of satire, in 1865 he pointed out the fact that, of the fifty years between 1815 and 1864 the wettest were '36, '41, '48, '52, and '60, and that, out of these, three were equidistant, giving what looked like a twelve-year period. Now

that such speculations are more favourably received, it may be permissible to state that '72 is just twelve years after '60, and that while this is written it is raining steadily, with plenty of inundations in plenty of quarters.

In contrast with this, during the "gran seco" in the Pampas, between the years 1827 and '30, the vegetation, even to the thistles, failed. The brooks were dried up, all the small rivers became highly saline, causing the death of vast numbers of animals. The whole country assumed the appearance of a dusty high road. In fact, such quantities of dust were blown about that, in that open country, the landmarks became obliterated, and people could not tell the limits of their estates. Disputes arose in consequence. Multitudes of birds and wild and domestic animals perished for want of food and water. The deer came into a court-yard to a well which a man had been obliged to dig to supply his own family with water.

More than this, there are localities, as in the Great Desert, where it never rains at all; also within the Arctic and Antarctic Circles, where the deposition of water on the earth occurs only in the shape of snow (and that the very finest) and frozen vapour, or minute particles of ice floating in the air. Neither does it hail there, hail being frozen rain.

Water has even an invisible state, in which it increases the clearness of the atmosphere. Amongst the traditional signs of rain are:

Along the stream the swallows fly,  
The distant hills are looking nigh.

There is no better example of invisible water than that given by Doctor Tyndall. At every puff of a railway locomotive, a cloud is projected into the air. Watch it sharply: you notice that it first forms at a little distance from the top of the funnel. Give close attention, and you will sometimes see a perfectly clear space between the funnel and the cloud. Through that clear space the thing which makes the cloud must pass. What, then, is this thing which at one moment is transparent and invisible, and at the next moment visible as a dense opaque cloud? It is the steam or vapour of water from the boiler. Every bit of steam shrinks, when chilled, to a much more minute particle of water. The liquid particles thus produced form a kind of water-dust of exceeding fineness, which floats in the air, and is called a cloud.

And not only is it called, but it is a



cloud. On a chain of mountains you often see a bit of cloud fastened, like a flag, to the summit of every peak, while the intervals between them remain perfectly clear. The fact is so familiar as to have given rise to popular names. The Wrekin has his nightcap, the Table Mountain his table-cloth. Doctor Tyndall figures and describes the cloud-banner of the Aiguille du Drû. I have seen a cloud-flag hang to Mont Ventoux for hours and days together, apparently unaltered and unmoved. But its fixity is only apparent. When the streamer of cloud drawn out from an Alpine peak is many hundred yards in length, we wonder at its obstinate persistence in spite of a high wind which may be blowing all the while. But in reality its substance is ever changing. The invisible vapour, forced up the mountain side, is chilled and condensed into fog at the top. The banner, which is incessantly dissolved at the further end, is incessantly renewed at its points of contact with the peak. In consequence of this equalisation of consumption and supply, the cloud appears as changeless as the mountain to which it clings. "When the red evening sun," writes Doctor Tyndall, "shines upon these cloud-streamers, they resemble vast torches with their flames blown through the air."

Air, at a certain temperature, can hold only a certain quantity of invisible watery vapour. That is, the quantity of moisture contained by air when saturated with it, is constant and fixed for every degree of temperature. The drier the air, and the hotter the air, the greater is the amount of cloud which can thus be dissolved in it. Consequently, the invisible water-vapour in air becomes visible when a lowering of temperature, or an increase of moisture, brings it to the point of saturation. What we call a cloud, therefore, is water-vapour which the air cannot absorb when it is saturated, and which differs from the vapour already absorbed by passing into the state which Doctor Tyndall calls water-dust, consisting, according to recent investigations, of minute vesicles or bladders. By watching a small cloud which hangs low in the air, we may often make a good guess at the weather. If it grows smaller, melts away, and is dissolved in the air, we may expect a dry day, or at least a few dry hours. If it grows heavier, and amplifies its proportions, we may take our umbrella under our arm, with the likelihood of having to hold it overhead.

This change of water from the gaseous to the molecular state, can take place at any altitude. When it occurs at the ground level, we call it fog; but there is no essential difference between a cloud and a fog. While traversing clouds in a balloon, no resistance is felt; the air is simply more or less opaque, chilly, and moist, exactly as happens on the ground, according to the nature of the fog or mist. The same with clouds encountered on mountains. But although there is no essential difference between clouds and fogs, there really is one of fact or circumstance. A fog is the produce of a place or locality in which water-vapour passes from the invisible to the visible state; a cloud is a free individual object, an unattached grouping of vapours into forms so determinate that clouds are classified according to their shapes. The one is fixed, local, and uniform, the other is movable, and of variable aspect.

Examined with a magnifying glass, fog is composed of tiny bodies which are found to consist of water obeying the laws of universal gravitation. The water-molecules are little balls, like shot or melted lead fallen from a height, or mercury spilt on a mahogany table. Whether those spherules are hollow or not is a question on which meteorologists are not agreed. Halley, with apparent reason, maintained that they are. The deadening of sound by fog confirms the idea. Gas bubbles in water have the same effect. Probably, in mists, the vesicles are mingled with a considerable quantity of minute droplets of water.

Take a cup full of any dark-coloured liquid, as, for example, coffee. Heat it, and set it in the sunshine. If the air is calm a vapour rises and soon disappears. With a magnifying lens globules are seen to rise. The smallest rapidly cross the field of the lens; the others fall back on the surface of the liquid. De Saussure declares that the little vesicles which mount are so completely different from those which fall back again that it is impossible to doubt that the former are hollow.

Their behaviour with light confirms the opinion. Everybody has remarked the iridescent hues that gleam on the surface of soap bubbles. In order that those colours should appear, it is optically necessary that the film containing the bubble of air should be excessively thin. Kratzenstein examined with a magnifying glass, in sunshine, the vesicles that steamed up from

the surface of hot water, and saw on their surface coloured rings exactly like those on soap bubbles; and not only was he convinced respecting their structure, but he was able to calculate the thickness of their envelope.

De Saussure and Kratzenstein tried to measure with the microscope the diameter of the vesicles composing visible water-vapour; but hot-water steam can hardly be expected to give the same results as natural fog. Kaemtz made numerous measurements on mists in Central Germany and Switzerland. He found that in winter, when the air is very moist, the diameter of the vesicles is twice as great as in summer, when the air is dry. But in the course of the same month the diameter varies. The average diameter of mist vesicles may be taken at one-fiftieth part of a millimetre. The length of the millimetre is three hundredth parts of an English inch. Their minimum diameter occurs in very fine weather; when rain threatens, it increases; and immediately before a downfall it is very unequal in the same cloud, probably in consequence of the mixture of hollow vesicles with full droplets.

When we behold a cloud resolve itself into rain and pour out thousands of gallons of water, we marvel that such an enormous weight of fluid should be capable of suspension in the atmosphere. The cause consists simply in its extreme divisibility. The fiftieth part of three hundredth parts of an English inch is smallness beyond our clear conception; and this is not the minimum, but the average size of the particles of water-dust. Currents of warm air ascending from the earth's surface are quite sufficient to keep such tiny atoms afloat. They hang together in groups and masses in consequence of their mutual attraction; for attractive influences are the only obvious explanation of the very distinct forms and clearly defined outlines which clouds exhibit.

Thick fogs are sometimes odorous, by impregnation with diverse exhalations pervading the lower strata of the atmosphere. In Belgium and the north of Europe, they not unfrequently smell of turf. In Paris, during the chilly fogs of October, 1871, especially in the evening of the 14th, a most disagreeable taint of petroleum was painfully perceptible.

The forms of clouds are infinitely diversified, from the flat thick mist which carpets the meadow to the bright white flakes which hover in the heights of the firma-

ment. The convenience of some sort of classification, for literary and scientific purposes, led the meteorologist Howard to give names to the principal types, which have been generally adopted. Our commonest fair-weather cloud is the cumulus, accumulated masses of white vapour, Ossa piled on Pelion, Mont Blanc on the top of Chimborazo, sometimes with cauliflower heads, called by French sailors "bales of cotton," with a horizontal and level base. Cumuli are par excellence the clouds which afford free scope to the imagination. They offer promontories on which angels might alight; they are snowy Alps, dolomite mountain ranges, concentrated glaciers, wintry pine forests, dragons, camels, flying chariots with demons hidden within. Ossian owes something to the cumulus cloud; which also varies into the cumulo-stratus, a hybrid between the pure vapour alp and the stratus proper, the long, horizontal, parallel banks of mist stretching across the sky, and doubtless the self-same famous cloud that was once thought "very like a whale."

The cloud which gives long-continued rain, the nimbus, which, in fact, is the fountain and source of wet seasons, covers the whole sky with an enormous dull-grey winding sheet. Its slightly undulated lower surface gives out an incessant showery drip; its heaving and irregular upper surface is invisible except to balloonists who have emerged aloft after passing through its thousands of feet of thickness. When it comes creeping over the firmament, adieu to all hope of the afternoon walk. Picnics may be put off till that day week, and smart clothing consigned to the wardrobe. The nimbus is the world's wet blanket.

All clouds are formed of watery vesicles more or less small, and more or less crowded. But clouds are not confined to the atmospheric regions, whose temperature is above the freezing point. They also float in glacial altitudes where the vesicular water is congealed into minute filaments of ice. Such clouds, composed of ice or snow, give rise to the optical phenomena of halos, parahelia, and the like. Their height above the earth is very considerable. When a balloon has reached its greatest elevation, it does not seem even to approach those clouds, whilst a moderate ascent carries the aeronaut far above the cumulus and its fellow children of the mist. Mr. Glaisher, at an elevation of some forty thousand feet, saw them hanging, inapproachable, over-

head. Such a cloud is called a cirrus, a curl, a lock of frizzled hair, which approximately describes its shape. Country people know them as "mares' tails." By combination or transition, they form the cirro-cumulus and the cirro-stratus. But in fact all the varieties of cloud may be separated into two grand categories: the cumulus, formed of liquid vesicles, and the cirrus, consisting of frozen particles.

When a cloud is about to resolve itself into rain, it acquires increased density, grows darker, and (except in the case of hail or a squall) spreads over an extensive area. The water detached from it would fall vertically, if the atmosphere were calm and the drops sufficiently heavy; but two causes, the wind and the lightness of the new-born drops, make them fall obliquely as a sort of train hanging from the cloud, which sails in advance. The production of rain mostly occurs when one layer of cloud overlies another; and it is the upper cloud which determines the precipitation of water from the lower one. Numerous observers have remarked that when two masses of air, saturated or nearly so with moisture, but of different temperatures, meet, a downfall of rain is the consequence. Nor is there any limit to the rainfall, so long as a current of cold cloud from one direction, say north-east, passes over another current of warm saturated cloud arriving continuously from an opposite direction, say south-west.

The formation of rain from impalpable molecules, the moderate altitude at which it takes shape and consistency, the gradual increase of its volume as it descends, and consequently the slight force, and the inconsiderable masses, with which it strikes the surface of the earth, are so many proofs of the wise arrangements with which a benevolent Providence has surrounded us "in this wonderful system of things that we call Nature." Rains, even when excessive and long-continued, do little injury to the face of a land, while they fill reservoirs, natural and artificial, sweeten and soften the atmosphere, thoroughly cleanse and sweep away impurities from large assemblages of human dwellings, consolidate and fill up swamps, and gradually raise lowlands to a higher level. Inundations even are not unmixed evils, as the valley of the lower Nile can testify.

What if it had been otherwise! If rain came bodily from the upper regions, to dash on the ground with accelerated velocity, or in sheets, if only one or two inches thick, or in masses, cataracts, or water-spouts!

All these cases we can easily imagine, and shudder at the catastrophes they would inevitably produce. We can fancy them the more readily because there occur occasional deviations from the normal order of things, sufficient to make us thankful that they should be the exception and not the rule.

Rain is of necessity the primeval form of actual water. In its liquid state water probably first appeared on earth, in the midst of incessant explosions and long-rolling thunder, as rain, perhaps scalding hot, whether condensed from steam or the result of the combination of its constituent gases, to be immediately repelled, in the shape of vapour, from the heated surface of such ground as there was then. We have the prints of early rain-drops petrified in sandstone, but they could not have been the earliest, or anything like it, because sand is a product of the mechanical action of waves or water-courses. At first rivers could not be. The rains that fell would be re-evaporated before they could combine into a stream of any size.

Not only is rain unequally distributed, but the inequality varies on the very same spot; that is, climates change. The amount of vapour condensed into rain or snow is liable to increase or diminution. When Doctor Tyndall visited the Mer de Glace last June, after an absence of twelve years, it exhibited in a striking degree that excess of consumption over supply which, if continued, will eventually reduce the Swiss glaciers to the mere spectres of their former selves. When he first saw the Mer de Glace, its ice-cliffs towered over Les Mottets, and an arm of the Arveiron, issuing from the cliffs, plunged as a powerful cascade down the rocks. The ice has now shrunk far behind them. The ice-vault of the Arveiron has dwindled considerably. The ice-cascade of the Géant has suffered much from the general waste. Its crevasses are still wild, but the ice-cliffs and séracs of former days are to-day but poorly represented. The great Aletsch and its neighbours exhibit similar evidences of diminution.

In the north of Chile, we learn from Mr. Darwin, old and deserted houses are numerous. Traces of Indian habitations have been discovered in many parts where the land is now unfit for any kind of cultivation. On the Andes there are many buildings at heights so great as almost to border on the perpetual snow, where the land produces absolutely nothing, and, what is still more extraordinary, where

there is no water. Nevertheless, from the appearance of the houses, the Indians must have used them as their places of residence. Some supply of water near them must, therefore, formerly have existed. If at the present time two or three showers of rain were to fall annually, instead of one, as now is the case, during two or three years, a small rill of water would probably be formed in that great valley. And then, by irrigation (which was formerly so well understood by the Indians), the soil would easily be rendered sufficiently productive to support a few families.

It is some comfort, after the recent long-continued spell of wet, to know from this instance that an excessive rainfall is less incompatible with human welfare than excessive drought.

#### HOME.

WHEN daily tasks are done, and tired hands  
Lie still and folded on the resting knee,  
When loving thoughts have leave to loose their bands,  
And wander over past and future free;  
When visions bright of love and hope fulfilled,  
Bring weary eyes a spark of olden fire;  
One castle fairer than the rest we build,  
One blessing more than others we desire;  
A home, our home, wherein all waiting past,  
We two may stand together, and alone;  
Our patient taskwork finished, and at last  
Love's perfect blessedness and peace our own.  
Some little nest of safety and delight,  
Guarded by God's good angels day and night.

We cannot guess if this dear home shall lie  
In some green spot embowered with arching trees,  
Where bird-notes joined with brook-notes gliding by,  
Shall make us music as we sit at ease.  
Or if amid the city's busy din  
Is built the nest for which we look and long,  
No sound without shall mar the peace within,  
The calm of love that time has proved so strong.  
Or if, ah! solemn thought, this home of ours  
Doth lie beyond the world's confusing noise;  
And if the nest be built in Eden bowers,  
What do we still, but silently rejoice?  
We have a home, but of its happy state  
We know not yet. We are content to wait.

#### DAME CUMBERBACH AND THE LITTLE MARKET-GARDENERS.

##### IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

LITTLE Katty was a waif upon London streets, belonging to nobody, yet somehow getting more care bestowed on her than often falls to the lot of the children of the poor. Her mother had lived in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden Market, and when she died the market-women could not find it in their hearts to send the child to the workhouse. One kept her a week and another a fortnight, one bought her a frock and another a pair of shoes, and when she grew older they set her up in business.

When they came in early with their baskets from the country, or filled them out of the gardeners' carts, they would each save a little something for Katty out of their stores; a clump of fresh primulas or a root of musk, a rose for a gentleman's button-hole, or a handful of herbs. Katty would hover about the crossings or pose herself against a lamp-post, and would be sure to have earned her supper when the day was done. At the age of fifteen she was a thrifty woman of business, with peachy cheeks and laughing eyes, and a sweet and merry voice which made the people stay to buy. None other could make such a picture with an armful of fresh roses, or a basket of white lilies, or a heap of glowing tulips perched on the shoulder. People would turn their heads for a glimpse of the roguish face which looked out on them through a moving bush of bloom. She seemed unprotected, yet had a friend in every street, from the asthmatic old umbrella-mender down to the whole regiment of youthful shoe-blacks.

The person who loved Katty best in the world was Dan, the market-gardener's lad from Applethorpe; a strong active youth with reddish hair and a pair of tender grey eyes that might have belonged to any woman. His voice had a cheery ring, perhaps from his keeping company with the larks, and he smiled as if accustomed to have the sun on his face. His breath, like the country air, had a puff of strength in it, and the stamp of his foot on the London pavement had the honest clink of a spade in the furrow. His father had been a market-gardener. When he died his gardens had passed into other hands, and his widow had almost worn her eyes blind with sewing, to keep herself and son out of the grave or the workhouse. Now her son was nearly a man, and could get a man's full wages for his work. He worked in the very gardens which his father had owned for years, and had a gallant hope of some day winning them back.

One summer morning Dan was rumbling along the road from Applethorpe in his gardener's cart, on his master's business to Covent Garden Market. All the way as he went he left a track of fragrance on the twilight air of the dawn. Round about his knees were packed heaps of mint and sweet marjoram, sheaves of spicy lavender, and bundles of pungent thyme. In front of his cart stood a row of budding and blooming rose-trees, and baskets of late strawberries nestled between fresh lettuces



and peas. As he drove past the sleeping farm-houses the cocks crowed, and a crimson light crept out from under the edges of the sky behind the trees, and made all the fields blush and the cottage windows twinkle. The sun was blazing brightly when he arrived at the market; and there was Katty waiting for him, in her fresh cotton gown, with her coarse yellow bonnet tipped over her eyes.

"Oh, Dan! oh, Katty!" A little brown hand was squeezed by a big red one; and the little girl made herself busy, picking and choosing out of the cartful of country sweets.

"I have two bits of extra business with you to-day, Katty," said Dan, "so you might first sit down on these cauliflowers, and let's have it out at once!"

"Goodness!" cried Katty, mischievously, "to think of Dan having more in his mind besides the cabbages!"

"You won't laugh when I tell you about my first piece of business," said Dan. "It's about that poor Mrs. Huckleberry who lives under the hedge of our pea-field. One of her children is sick, and they're nearer starving than ever; and she a lady with rich friends all the time. Last night she came to me and her face was white, and 'Oh, Dan!' said she, 'will you take this to London with you, and see if it mightn't be sold? I've worked at it night and day,' she said, 'and it's a thing that ladies wear. It ought to fetch two or three guineas; and maybe Jacky needn't die.'"

"Oh, dear!" cried Katty, piteously, and opened Mrs. Huckleberry's parcel.

"It's very lovely lace, Dan; but you don't expect me to buy it. I'm afraid my basket would tear it, for it's to be worn on a lady's shoulders."

"I knew you'd have your joke at it," laughed Dan; "but you'll manage the matter somehow."

Katty spread the thing on her lap, a lace pelerine of most delicate pattern, and presently clapped her hands, crying, "I'll sell it this day to Lady Cumberbach!"

A great lumbering carriage came along the pavement at this moment and stopped among the baskets, the empty hampers, and the flower-pots. Everybody stared at it, for gentlefolks do not make their purchases at six o'clock in the morning; and one bystander said to another, "It is that mad Dame Cumberbach!"

"No sooner said than done!" cried Katty, "for here is the old lady herself!"

Lady Cumberbach was sitting up between

the windows of her coach like a mummy in a glass case, her face like a mask of parchment shrivelled up into a thousand wrinkles, a patch of rouge on either cheek, and a bunch of silvered curls hanging over her witch-like eyes. Up to her peaked chin she was wrapped in furs, though the month was July. In an instant her head was thrust out of the window.

"Little Katty, come here! I will not be kept waiting on that great lout from the country. What have you got to show me? A rose-tree with a hundred blossoms? A lily ten feet high? I'm dying for something new. I'm tired of everything!"

"I know!" cried Katty, and plunged among the flower-pots, seized on a prickly shrub, and began plaiting Dan's lace into a lily before his eyes, pinched it and puckered it, and finally fixed it as a monster blossom on a branch of the shrub; then was on the carriage-step in a twinkling.

"Eh, what!" cried the old lady. "Good heavens! where are my spectacles? You don't mean to say it is really a new flower!"

"Only five guineas!" said Katty. "A flower at this moment, and something else when you will." And she plucked the supposed blossom and flung the lace across the old woman's knees.

"Ah, you clever monkey, you will certainly keep me alive these many years with your tricks. This lace is really charming. Here are your five guineas, child, and I hope you did not steal the thing. And now some flowers, quick! I'm longing for something fresh from the country!"

Katty did not need to be bidden twice; sped back to Dan and dropped the guineas into his hand, and flashed back to the carriage with her arms full of the sweetest the cart had brought. They were packed round the weird old lady till she looked like the bad fairy in the garden of the princess, snuffing their sweet perfume, and pressing their shrinking blossoms to her poor old cheeks. Even this was not enough, for she caught Katty by the hand, and pulled her into the carriage.

"Sit here beside me," she said. "There is plenty of room left, and you must drive round the Park with me, and come home to breakfast. I tell you, child, I will have you, so you need not pull away. Your merry voice is life to me—and I'm dying for something fresh. I can't sleep at night, and it's the staleness of everything round me that keeps me awake; and I can't eat or drink because everything tastes so

mouldy. If I don't eat nor sleep I shall die; so come and keep me alive, you monkey, come and keep me alive!"

In spite of Katty's struggles, the door was shut, the coachman touched his horses, and the coach set off; the old lady nodding with excitement, and Katty making rueful faces through the window back at Dan, who remained disconsolate among his cauliflowers and roses, with his second piece of business untransacted on his hands.

Lady Cumberbach lived in a tall, gaunt house, in a square, with four servants, two tom-cats, a parrot, a dog, and a monkey. Her rooms were luxuriously furnished, and there were plenty of them; so many indeed, that some were always locked, and never entered, except when the monkey played his favourite trick of opening their doors with a stolen key. The windows were dark with heavy hangings, the stairs were dark, and the hall and passages. The air was heavy with perfumes, and fires were always burning lest there should be a breath of chill or damp. The carpets were all of a plum-pudding pattern, and the stiff silk curtains were covered with flowers as big as tea-saucers. The windows did not open, so that it was little wonder that the dame should gasp for a mouthful of freshness, or that her flowers should wither after a day in the heated atmosphere of her dwelling.

Lady Cumberbach was assisted from her coach by a gold-headed staff, as well as by the arm of her footman. She could walk into her dining-room with the help of the stick alone, but she had to be carried upstairs when she went to her drawing-room or bedroom. She never went at all beyond the second flight of stairs; it was many a year since her feet had travelled the long, winding staircase which soared to the dimness and silence of the neglected upper story. The place was haunted, if not by the dead, at least by the ghosts of sad, living people, who ought to have been housed in these empty chambers, but suffered somewhere in the blast of the world outside. Fear of such ghostly footsteps kept the dame awake at nights, and it was the dread of their wandering voices that made her nail down her windows, and muffle up her doors, lest the wicked wind should mock her with the sound of a human wail.

Katty knew nothing of this when she sat with her at breakfast, and had tea and smoking cutlets from the slim and noiseless footman. At table were Katty and Dame Cumberbach, the monkey, and the

dog, the parrot, and the two tom-cats. All had tea and cutlets, and what with the general remarks of the company, there was little danger of annoyance from the sighs of ghosts. Katty chattered to the old lady, making her shriek and shake with laughter. The dame still kept her furs, though there was a fire, and over them wore the fine lace pelerine.

"I'll wear it now, while it is fresh," said her ladyship. "By-and-bye, when it is stale, I shall get to hate it. Everything is sure to turn stale as soon as it becomes used to this mouldy house!"

After breakfast Dame Cumberbach fell suddenly asleep in her chair; the monkey retired to a corner, and curled himself up for a doze, the cats blinked their eyes, and rolled themselves into balls on the hearth, the parrot twisted himself into a contortion of repose on his perch, and the pug burrowed in his cushion, and snored aloud. If her ladyship could not sleep at nights, she would, at all events, try to make up for it while the sun was high in the sky. The little guest was beginning to wonder if the cook was asleep at the fire, and the maids at their work, when the door opened softly, and the footman brought in a dusting brush, with which he swept all the dust, and little Katty, out of the room.

"People musn't stay here," he said, "unless they choose to sleep;" and vanished to the lower regions, leaving Katty bewildered in the hall. She soon recovered her wits, however, and began to climb the stairs; went up and up, meeting nobody till she got quite into the silent stories of Lady Cumberbach's haunted house.

The flights of stairs were long and steep, the lobby windows high and gaunt, shrouded with blinds of a dusky hue, and on the first high landing stood an old-fashioned clock, a tall, spare figure erect upon fierce claws: with a wild white face, bristling helmet, and a dreadful loud heart beating under its ribs. Katty knew nothing about fear, having met with no cause for it. Smiles, and jokes, and flowers had been her portion, hard work, and love, and rude living. Mystery did not awe her; she shook the handle of a door that stood facing the clock, but the door was locked.

The monkey here came hopping up-stairs with the key in his hand; at which sight Katty broke out into such laughter, that it was a wonder Dame Cumberbach did not wake moaning out of her sleep. Thanks to muffled doors, no such catastrophe occurred, and Katty entered the chamber along with the monkey. It was a large

room, and elegantly fitted with delicate silk hangings, which were sadly stained by the dust. There were mirrors from floor to ceiling, which had become as dim as if they had been eyes blinded by tears; pictures and statuettes, a piano and guitar, with piles of yellow music-paper, and ornaments of tarnished gold. On the wall hung a picture of a beautiful, smiling girl in a satin gown, and with jewels in her ears, with winning eyes, and waving hair, and cheeks that were fairer than Katty's. Who could this maiden be? thought the girl. Never Lady Cumberbach, even if painted a hundred years. Leaving this chamber, Katty peered down through the banisters, and saw no one coming to seek for her. She therefore grew bolder, and tripped up a winding staircase, which led to the topmost story of the house. At the top of this flight there was a wooden gate, which opened with a spring, and then Katty was in a second room, which was also unlocked by the key the monkey had brought.

This was a nursery. There were pictures of pretty children on the wall, and a guard round the fireplace to keep little ones from burning their rosy fingers. The monkey hopped before Katty with his head sadly on one side, and a serious look on his face, as he flung open drawers and presses, and exposed the contents of cupboards to the light of day. Mugs hung in the cupboards as if placed there only that morning after breakfast, and shelves were lined with long-disused toys. The monkey dived into drawers, shaking out frocks and pinafores, stockings, and tiny shoes. Katty looked at these in amazement, folded, and restored them to their hiding-places, stepping softly about, and holding her breath, afraid to break the hush of this quiet place. These rooms were a mystery to her. Had Lady Cumberbach, then, had children, and were they dead? There were little beds in an inner room, in which four little forms must have slept, and on which, perhaps, four little coffins had lain. After much wondering, the girl turned her back upon this puzzle. She closed softly the nursery door, and, still followed by the monkey, took her way down the stairs again to the hall. There was no life anywhere; she was seized with a longing to be out in the living sunshine, back again in the flower-market, with the country scents around her. She opened the hall-door, and, in another moment, was gone.

Next morning Dan drove into the market with an anxious face, which brightened when he saw Katty among the flowers.

"Ah!" he cried. "So you have really come back! What have I not suffered since the old woman ran away with you. But it is now my turn to carry you off."

He then explained the business that had been left unsettled yesterday. His mother wanted to see Katty, the little maid who loved her son. London was hot and dusty, and the country must be a treat to a creature whose entire world consisted of a block of crowded streets. Would Katty go down to Applethorpe? The girl's eyes danced, and she needed no second bidding. She took her seat by Dan's side in the cart, and the horse was soon trotting along the road.

Up hill and down whirled the two young lovers in their market-cart. The air grew sweeter and fresher as the houses fled behind them, and clumps of trees came starting out of the distance, nodding a breezy welcome to the girl whose eyes had never rested on such a sight before. On, on, through miles of green hedges, with corn-fields and meadow-lands lying beyond. Rosy-cheeked farmers shouted a good-morrow to the little travellers, and home-returning milkmaids set down their brimming pails to gaze after the flying cart. Children clapped hands and cheered, and housewives looked out of their doorways. Every one knew Dan, but every one wondered who Katty might be.

Quick as the young people were, Dan's mother thought them long in performing their journey. They found her watching at her garden gate, looking down the road, with her two brown hands above her eyes. Dan's mother walked with a crutch, and was a small white-haired woman, in a scant brown gown, with bolster sleeves hooked round her shrivelled wrists, and a snow-white cap and apron, that made her glitter like a new-made pin. Her stout red-brick cottage glowed among laden fruit-trees at the lower end of the garden; hens that had done their duty that morning clucked a welcome round the doorway, while warm new-laid eggs waited on the breakfast-table. The widow's homely kitchen shone like a diamond, and Katty was perched in a high stuffed arm-chair, with a foot-stool attached to it, while Dan buttered smoking cakes on her plate, and his mother poured fragrant tea into the cups. This was a very different breakfast-table from that at which she had eaten but yesterday morning. No luxuries, no oddities, no cats and monkeys here; only signs of cheerful labour, peaceful comfort, and plenty of love. How Katty was taken round the cottage to look into drawers and cupboards,

how the delft plates were counted to her, and the little stores of linen spread under her eyes, how she visited every inch of the teeming garden, how she was introduced to the rose-tree named Katty, and the calf that licked her hand in token of friendship, how Dan's employer was so charmed with her merry eyes that he presented her with a bouquet—of all these doings it would take too long to tell. Twilight came down upon their garden before these happy cottagers thought the day had well begun. Then they all sat down to rest within the open doorway, and to talk in that dreamy way in which people talk at the hour between night and day. There was still a crimson line with a fringe of gold lying low along the sky behind the pear-trees, and the lattice window had espied it out, and shone with gazing at it. The dew was already at work, distilling delicious aroma out of the flowers. Peace was brooding over everything, like a sweet-breathed wide-winged angel, descending lower, and ever lower, with the dusk, upon the earth, and under the shelter of his robe came a slight dim figure down the pathway towards the cottage.

"Ah, it is Mrs. Huckleberry," said Dan's visitor. "Dear, dear, dear, but happiness does make a body selfish. I never thought of her once this livelong day."

Dan sprang up to leave his chair for the visitor, who wore a dark faded gown, a whity-black cloak, supposed to be waterproof, hanging in a limp desponding manner about the angles of her shoulders. Her face, even in the dusk, suggested starvation; the eyes were bright and sunk, and the cheek-bones marked as only want could mark them. Hardships had drawn a cruel cord round a mouth which had once been pretty; yet with all these sad disfigurements the pale dim Mrs. Huckleberry possessed a certain charm of indescribable grace. She was a lady in all her movements, and her bearing was dignified by the tender humility in her eyes. All this Katty discerned even in the dusk, while a strange fancy took possession of her—an idea that she had seen Mrs. Huckleberry before. And not very long ago either, though the memory of such meeting with her was like a dream in Katty's mind.

"And so this is your little London friend," said the pale lady. "How youth will sometimes bloom in spite of smoke and soot!" She sighed, passing her hand over Katty's rounded cheek, and thinking of some cheeks that would not bloom in spite

of the encouraging breeze that blew round the fields of Applethorpe.

"Ay, this is our Katty," said the widow, "who will belong to us altogether by-and-bye. And how is your poor little Jacky, ma'am? for, shame to say, I did not go near the place since seven o'clock this morning."

"Pretty well," said the sad lady, sighing. "I left him asleep. I have been sewing in the village all day, and ever since I got home something has kept urging me to come and see your visitor. Here I am, come in the end because I could not help it."

The meek lady sat among her humble friends for a full hour, and as the simple talk went round Katty often met the stranger's bright eyes, which would fix themselves on the girl's happy face. Where could it have been that the same soft glance had rested on her so lately? Katty did not know, could not guess; but in every pause of the conversation found herself wandering in fancy through the deserted upper story of Lady Cumberbach's house. Katty was not used to mysteries, and her head began to go round. The fascination of the stranger was such that when she rose to depart Katty sprang up also, and asked to be taken with her. "Let me see the children," she said, and the pale Mrs. Huckleberry actually blushed with gratification. She seized Katty by the hand, while Dan and his mother nodded their consent. As they stepped out of the doorway the lady's shadowy face looked back at the blooming one following her. That glance of the eyes, that turn of the head—where had she seen them before? thought Katty.

The moon had risen high, and the apples were rimmed with silver, the paths were white as though there had been a snow-storm, and the roses were glistening with dew on their bushes. The pale-faced woman hovered along between flower-beds and fruit-trees, guiding her steps daintily, with a grace never learned from the peasants at Applethorpe, and Katty followed her through gardens and meadows till, quite at the end of the pea-field, appeared a log-built cabin nestling for shelter in the bowery hedge.

There were two rooms in the cabin, in both of which Katty found that she could stand straight, but Mrs. Huckleberry, who was tall, had to stoop as she moved about. There were but three articles of furniture in the place, and on the table lay some sewing work, and a candle ready to be lighted. Here would the poor lady sit and sew till her sunken eyes had out-watched



the stars. In the second room, curled up in a bed which almost covered the floor, lay the four sleeping children; little Jacky with his white lips and transparent eyelids, Polly with rosy cheeks, and chubby arms tossed over her head, Nell with a look of care on her sleeping brows, and Tom, who had such an appetite for bread and milk, and who could not understand why it was often not to be had. Katty kissed their lips and straightened their covering as if she had been a mother all her life; and Mrs. Huckleberry embraced her, crying, "Would God make such creatures as these, little Katty, and then let them die of hunger?" At which Katty began to weep, vowing she would starve herself to death sooner than believe it.

"Ah," said the little girl, "to think of Lady Cumberbach with her table spread for cats and dogs!"

"Cumberbach!" echoed the poor lady, and began to shake as if a wind had come through the doorway. "Where does she live?"

"In Blank-square," said Katty, "in a house great enough for a hospital."

Whereupon Mrs. Huckleberry sank trembling on her children's bed, murmuring, "Little Katty, Lady Cumberbach is my mother."

Katty stared. "Do not speak," said the sad lady, "but let us get out into the air." And again they walked silently through the dim flowers in the garden under the moonlight.

"Sit down with me under this southern-wood bush," said Mrs. Huckleberry at last, and thus sheltered and hid away out of the world the timid creature whispered her life's history into the little market-woman's ear. The only child of an unloving mother, she had married against that mother's will. She had chosen love and poverty, and with them sickness and death, in exchange for luxury, and selfishness, and sloth of heart. She was now a widow, and had asked in vain for the crumbs that fell from her mother's table. Mrs. Huckleberry wept in relating her woes, but Katty sat lost in wonder.

"Dreadful, dreadful," she cried. "We will not hear it any longer." Mrs. Huckleberry shook her head, but Katty stamped her foot.

"How are we going to help it, Katty?"

"I do not know; but why have I come here if not to do something? We must drive the cats and dogs from your mother's table, Mrs. Huckleberry, and put your children in their place."

The meek lady stared at the audacious little woman. "God bless you, my girl!" she said, "but you do not know what you are talking about."

Then Dan was seen coming along the garden path, and the pale lady went back to her vigil. Katty dreamt that night of Lady Cumberbach sitting at her fireside with little Jacky in her lap, while the monkey walked round the market-gardens—all enclosed in Lady Cumberbach's dining-room—leading Jacky's sisters and brother by the hand.

#### CHAPTER II.

WINTER set in, and Katty's merchandise was not so blooming as when we first made her acquaintance. She had often to set down her basket, so that she might slap her cold hands together, for they would freeze even under the mittens that Dan's mother had sent her. Katty was a little downcast, even though Dan's kind heart was more loving than ever, and the time was approaching when he would carry her off for good in his cart to Applethorpe. She was sad only in the interests of the thin Mrs. Huckleberry. Lady Cumberbach was no longer among Katty's patrons, having taken offence at the manner in which the girl had left her house on that memorable summer morning, without waiting for dismissal. When her coach now arrived in the market, the old lady addressed herself to other merchants, and when her pet of old approached her, Lady Cumberbach turned her face the other way; and so Katty found herself powerless to give help to her friends.

One day the footman whom Katty remembered presented himself in the market, and asked for the little flower-girl. His mistress was very ill, he said, and requested that the child would come to her. As quickly as feet could carry her Katty made her way to the great mansion in the square. The place was more quiet than usual as the girl crept in at the door of the dame's bedroom, and saw a wrinkled fallow face tossing uneasily among the pillows of a fine state bed. The blinds were all down, and the rich flowered curtains carefully drawn. A large fire burned, and there was a powerful odour of musk in the room. Lady Cumberbach had taken to her bed without exactly knowing what was the matter with her. She declared to her doctor that it was the staleness of everything that had at last overpowered her, and the doctor shook his head, and thought that she was sinking under a long course of selfishness and luxury. The pets were

brought to her bedside, but they were frightened at the fine lace flounces on her night-cap, and screamed about the room so that they had to be sent away. It was then that Lady Cumberbach, lying upon her back and staring upward, with no occupation but that of watching the dying flies crawling across the ceiling, felt the last agony of desolation seize on her heart. It was then that, as the drowning man will catch at a straw, she rang her bell frantically and sent in search of the little flower-maiden.

"Why do you come into my room with your bonnet on?" she asked sharply as Katty entered the chamber. "I want you to nurse me; so hang up your walking things, and sit down beside me."

She had quite expected that the girl would rebel, and though feeling herself at Katty's mercy, yet the wretched old woman could not restrain the bitterness that overflowed her dreary soul. To her amazement, Katty dropped a curtsy, and put her bonnet out of sight, tied on an apron and began arranging the fireplace, all with the quickest of noiseless movements and the cheeriest of smiles. Then on the harsh visage of the invalid there glimmered something like satisfaction, and she sank back on her pillows. Well might she have rejoiced if she had known the truth, that Katty had come to save her body and soul.

There was great discontent among the servants when it was found that Katty was installed as nurse, for though they had neglected their mistress for their own part, yet they did not like to have a stranger put in the place they had failed to fill. But Katty was not afraid of them; if they did not bring what she asked for, she walked down into the midst of them and chose for herself the thing she wanted. They began to admire her spirit, and finding her full of good humour, they at last became her friends. This was pleasant, but Katty had business to do, and she did not know how it was to be done. She sat pondering it in the quiet sick-room while her patient slept, and the daylight waned, and the fire-light made a dull glow about the spot where she was sitting, with nothing to do but listen to the ticking of the fierce clock on the upper landing, while she thought about Mrs. Huckleberry and her four famishing children.

Sometimes the old lady would wake up suddenly and command her little nurse to tell her stories, brisk stirring stories about the world of healthy people abroad in the streets. Katty did this bidding to the best

of her power, and Lady Cumberbach was enchanted with the new treatment of her case. She became interested in Katty's crude and sketchy annals of the poor, and for an hour at a time would forget the staleness of everything. She had refused all food, but could now take a cup of gruel after each recital.

One evening the patient called as usual for her story, and Katty began to pour forth a sad tale of a meek lady with four children who lived in a hut in a hedge of a pea-field close by Applethorpe.

"The lady is so thin," said Katty, "that you can almost see through her body."

"Ah, well!" said Dame Cumberbach, "perhaps she has been lying in bed a weary time like me."

"No," said Katty, "she is always on her feet. Besides she is quite a young woman, and ought to be fit and strong. Her thinness is caused by starvation."

"I don't quite believe that," said the dame, fidgeting; "but get on to a pleasanter part of the story."

"She sits up all night sewing," said Katty, "and she sews the whole day, yet she cannot feed her children. Children have such appetites, I can tell you! You know nothing about that, of course. You never had any children, Lady Cumberbach?"

The dame bounced in her bed at this abrupt question. She raised her weird hand as if she would strike little Katty, but let it fall again and groaned.

"Don't ask foolish questions," said she, faintly, "but go on and tell me about that 'lady' as you call her."

"But she is a lady, madam—I know her story. There is a picture in the next room of a beautiful girl in a satin gown. The poor mother was once like that, my Lady Cumberbach."

"How dare you say that?" cried the patient, sitting up in her bed.

"Now lie down, my lady dear, or I shall have to go back to the market. You asked for a story; but of course, if you are tired of me you must tell me, and I shall go."

Katty rose as she spoke, but the old lady pulled her by the hand.

"There, there, there! go on and say what you please. Your people are all strangers to me. Why should I trouble about their affairs?"

"I will tell you the lady's history. Her mother is a wealthy woman who feeds cats and dogs, and will not spare a crumb for her famishing grandchildren. The children's father was loving and poor, the grandmother rich and hard. My poor thin

lady is hated only because she wanted to be loved a little. Her husband is dead, her children are dying. They will soon be all together in their graves——”

“Stop!” shrieked Lady Cumberbach, “or I will have you punished. I have fallen into the hands of a wretch who will drive me mad!”

She moaned bitterly, with her face buried in the pillows. Katty began to mend the fire and to prepare the old lady's gruel.

Christmas was now at hand, and the cook was preparing good cheer for the festive time, saying that her mistress would be indignant if the old practice were forgotten. The dame was sick; but there were the cats, and the parrot, and the dogs to be entertained as befitted Christians, never to speak of the maids, the slim footman, and the fat coachman. Katty sat at the sick-room fire, and smelt savoury odours floating up the staircase, and through the keyhole. And she thought of the hungry Huckleberrys. Her patient lay in bed with closed eyes and knotted brows, and received her little attentions in sullen silence: did not ask a question nor make a remark, and wished for no further story-telling. Katty fled up to the nursery one evening to cry in the dark over her failure, and walked about wringing her hands with the monkey mournfully following her. Even now the cold was pinching little half-covered limbs, quite out of reach of her help, in the frost at Applethorpe. Getting reckless with pity she flew to the chest of drawers, where lay all that warm childrens' clothing which she had seen on that summer day, took out some frocks and stockings and little shoes, unhooked from the cupboard shelf the four china mugs with the baby names gilt upon them and shining in the lamp-light from the street, gathered all in the skirt of her gown, and returned to Lady Cumberbach's room.

“Where have you been?” asked the patient, discontentedly.

“In the nursery, your ladyship.”

Dame Cumberbach sat up in bed, as if she must once for all do battle.

“Who told you there was a nursery, and what did you want in it?”

“Some clothing for those poor children I was telling you about. The weather is terribly cold. In a bed in a warm room one does not feel it; but in a hovel under a hedge, with no fire and the snow around—ah, Lady Cumberbach, it is different!”

Katty spread out her spoils upon the counterpane as she spoke:

“So I thought you would give me these

things which were mouldering up yonder in the drawers. And these mugs very strangely have the childrens' names gilt upon them—there is Jack and there is Poll: here is Nell and little Tom. These are the names of the children who are starving.”

The wretched old woman tried to rise and speak aloud, but fell back whimpering and staring at Katty.

“Besides,” said the girl, not minding her, “you ought to pity these hungry people because the mother's name was Cumberbach.”

A cry broke from the sick woman, and she spread her shaking hands before her face, as if she would hide herself from Katty. “Go!” she said at last, and the girl was terrified and fled. Listening at the door Katty heard raving and mourning in a fearful voice, and fled still further away out of hearing. After a time she crept back and found silence—the silence of despair in the lonely chamber. As she hesitated before entering, the aged voice broke forth aloud:

“Now I have, indeed, driven away my good angel. My God, I deserve to be so forsaken!”

Upon this Katty stole into the room and found Lady Cumberbach lying on her pillows in an agonised attitude, with the bundle of little frocks hugged up to her breast. At the sound of the footsteps she started and growled:

“Is that you again?”

“Yes,” said Katty.

“Have you been listening at the door?”

“Yes,” said Katty. “And, oh, dear Lady Cumberbach, let me make you happy. Let me bring those little children.”

“Silence!” cried Lady Cumberbach.

Katty said no more, but curled herself up to sleep behind the foot of the patient's bed. There was no rest that night for the dame. Katty heard her tossing from side to side; but after some hours she grew quiet, and the little nurse thought she slept. As soon as there was a streak of day Katty popped her head above the foot-board of the bed, and saw the dame lying with wide-open eyes gazing towards the window through which the dawn was creeping; and there was a change upon her face which made Katty's heart leap. There was a murmuring sound as if the old woman was praying; Katty shrank back, unwilling to disturb her; when Lady Cumberbach caught her eye and sprang up in the bed.

“Bring them to me!” she cried, opening her arms, while a strange light flashed out of her face.

"Who?" asked Katty, bewildered.  
 "The children and their mother. Bring them quickly!"

Katty needed no second bidding. She fled from the house and arrived in the market just as Dan was mounting his cart to drive back to the country.

"Dan, Dan! Take me with you to Applethorpe."

"Ah, Katty, you runaway! I'll take you to Applethorpe, I warrant me."

"Fast, fast. I have such a deal to tell as we ride along."

Away they scampered off into the country. Katty told her story, and Dan, after his first burst of triumph at Katty's success, informed her of the sad state in which the Huckleberry family had lately lived.

"Only for my mother," he said, "they'd be dead from cold and hunger."

There was a scene of great excitement when Katty came flying along the frosty paths of the market-gardens and darted into the hut in the hedge of the pea-field. Mrs. Huckleberry was sitting on her hearth, which was quite cold, trying to rub a little warmth into poor Jacky's feet. She fainted away at the news, but was soon restored to her senses again, and able to help to dress the children in the comfortable clothing which Katty had brought them for the journey. Before the sun had set the thin lady had turned her back for ever on her hovel, and the cart packed with people had set out in glee from Applethorpe, and was again on the road to London.

The red sun glowed on them and on the beautiful snow-covered fields. The twilight came and sparks flashed from the flints under the horse's hoofs. The stars came out and blazed for triumph, and then our party arrived very tired at the great house in the London square. Katty stayed on the landing while the pale lady led her children into the bedroom to her mother. When the young girl ventured to peep in she found the children crawling over grandmother's bed, and Mrs. Huckleberry sitting clasping her mother's hand. The next day Lady Cumberbach was able to rise from bed. The staleness had gone from everything, and a new tide of life had flowed into her veins. The nursery was taken possession of at once, and the room where the picture hung was put in order for its tenant of former days. The feast provided for Christmas was not wasted, and the cats and dogs received only a fair share of it.

How Katty ruled in the nursery, how she shook the old red curtains across the windows, and made the fire roar; how

the old brass fire-guard shone and twinkled, and once more made itself useful to protect rosy fingers from the flames; how the four little beds were newly spread with linen, and the old toys pulled forth; how Mrs. Huckleberry cried when she heard the laughter of her children—of all this it is not necessary to give more than a hint.

"These," said Mrs. Huckleberry, taking up the mugs, which were set out for the children's tea, "belonged to myself and my sister and brothers who are dead. My children are named as we were named."

"They have been too long empty," said Katty, and filled them; and grandmamma's health was drunk all round.

## NOTES OR GOLD?

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN," "FATAL ZERO," &c. &c.

### CHAPTER XIV. SKIRMISHING.

EVERYBODY kept vowing that Mr. Doughty had not only grown young, but was growing younger every day; and indeed there was a brightness in his face and bearing, an excitement, a general interest in the world about him, which took at least ten years off his age. The acidity had worn off; his manner had become gracious and genial. He was talkative, gay—amused others, and was amused himself. It was declared (by the matrons), with enthusiasm, that "had he not a penny in the world," he was a charming man, to whom they would be delighted to give their daughters. What an exquisite taste was his—so refined! And how nicely he touched that curious instrument—what was it called?—the viola, giving it quite an individuality. Then the piano. To hear him accompany; what a treat! How he helped that girl through, who had not such a wonderful voice after all. There was the only blemish—one slight speck upon the sun. There was something unbecoming in this infatuation for a singer's daughter; though, of course, it might be only due to a pure love of art.

The position assumed by Mr. Nagle, however, was what mystified people most. That gentleman seemed to be installed altogether on the premises. He sat in the study permanently, as it were, at a secretaire, conducting correspondence, arranging the business matters of his friend, sending off telegrams, overlooking accounts, and performing all sorts of mysterious duties, which seemed to suggest his being at the head of some great counting-house. He



seemed to look on music as quite a subsidiary matter. Meanwhile the enchanting Corinna played in the great music-room, lighting it up with her presence, filling it with her inspiration, and gradually helping to work that change in the wealthy owner of the establishment which had caused so much remark in Brickford.

It was during one of these practices that the door opened suddenly, and Lady Duke presented herself. Mr. Nagle was at a desk in the corner writing despatches, Corinna was enthroned at the instrument. The music stopped. The situation was embarrassing, but Lady Duke was equal to it.

"Don't stop, don't stop," she cried, in a sort of anguish; but they did stop nevertheless. Behind her was her son.

Corinna rose up with a haughty dignity, Mr. Nagle coloured.

"I insist on your going on, my dear Mr. Doughty. You must not mind me. I wouldn't for the world interrupt your fine music." The fine music, however, had been interrupted. The performers felt that the temple was, as it were, profaned, and the charm gone.

"You have come to stay here?" said Mr. Doughty, coldly. "A curious place to choose. I mean," he added hastily, "for a lady with your tastes."

"You may say that, but I declare to you it is the only place in which I have found health. What with Doctor Meiklejohn and the air, I quite forget my neuralgia."

Mr. Doughty laughed good-humouredly. "After this," he said, "physicians will be ordering their patients down to smoky Brickford, as they would to Nice or Arcachon." His eyes had followed Corinna, who had moved disdainfully away to the window, whither Mr. Duke had attended her. "And your son," he added, in a hardening tone, "does he also suffer from neuralgia?"

Lady Duke laughed loudly. "You dreadful creature, how you see everything. But can you wonder? A charming girl! I frankly own I was prejudiced against her at first, but I have really grown to admire her spirit. She has conquered me in spite of myself."

This was said in a frank, genuine fashion. He looked at her doubtingly, then said, "If you knew her, or allowed yourself but the chance, you would see—you would indeed see how worthy she is of admiration. I have never met such a character."

This was like a blow in the midriff for his hearer, but she assented with extravagant cordiality.

"So Alfred thinks," she answered; "he worships the very ground under her feet." This, she knew, was a return blow. "He is infatuated about her, and I really fear that he is prepared to go any lengths."

"And disgrace you and your family! A discreditable alliance, that would corrupt the blood of the Plantagenets."

"My goodness, no, my dear sir. You, of course, as a man of the world, must see that marriage between persons of different stations is always unsuitable. But, of course, when young men come to a certain age, and when," added Lady Duke, slowly, "they are bent on taking a certain step, why then the only duty of a parent is not to offer an unreasonable opposition. In fact, to make the best of what is unavoidable."

Again Mr. Doughty's eyes wandered to the window, where the young people seemed so much interested in each other, as to be unconscious of who was looking at them. This added proof to Lady Duke's assertion. What she said shot into his heart like an arrow, and the clever woman of the world in those few moments had created for herself a relationship with this newly-enriched being of a more important kind than the rather shadowy relationship in blood which she claimed with him.

She passed over to Mr. Nagle, who, fuming in wounded dignity, affected to be completing a heavy correspondence. "I was delighted," she said, "to hear that all went off so charmingly. And I have been wishing to see you, to thank you for the way in which you acceded to my wishes about Alfred's singing. I heard how you refused to allow of his appearance; it was most delicate and gentleman-like on your part."

Mr. Nagle coloured with pleasure, though startled at this unexpected version of his behaviour. He actually hurriedly tried back in his memory to see what had taken place, and to his surprise found that he had been careless as to Mr. Duke's appearance, and that his Corinna had vehemently opposed it. So he had behaved handsomely and in a gentleman-like way. It was lady-like and condescending in Lady Duke to make the acknowledgment. Still, some rather blunt expressions had been used, and language certainly contemptuous had been addressed to him.

"Your daughter, I fear," she went on, reading his face, "thinks I was a little hasty the other day. I own it. But you must consider a mamma's feelings, and poor Alfred you know would have made a sad

exhibition of himself. I could not bear to see him break down."

Delighted Mr. Nagle called enthusiastically to his daughter:

"Corinna, come over here. Lady Duke wishes——"

The haughty look with which Corinna turned round at these words! The no less scornful air with which she commenced a stately march across the room, and fairly confronted the lady!

"My lady was kind enough to mention that—er—little affair the other day, and to appreciate what we did. It is most good of her ladyship, Corinna——"

"What, on the day she entered our house, and spoke to you—to us," said she, with flashing eyes, "in a style that——"

"Oh, hush! nonsense," said Mr. Nagle, excitedly. "You don't understand."

"With all my heart," said Corinna. "But let no more be said of that, for it crushes me with humiliation even to think of it." And she swept away across the room.

Mr. Doughty was listening with wonder and unconcealed admiration.

"This is quite melodramatic," said Lady Duke, laughing. "But," she added, turning to Mr. Doughty, "I shall make my son Alfred intercede for me."

Again a sort of nervous spasm across Mr. Doughty's face. Corinna was a strange girl. It seemed as though she delighted in purposely tormenting the man who showed such a deep interest in her. It might be hard to analyse this feeling. But she no doubt wished to show that, in spite of all obligation, she was determined to retain her independence.

Lady Duke then resumed. "Do you know what I came to-day for? I am going to give a little party, with good music afterwards—really good, and I want you, my dear Mr. Doughty, to help me. I am sure Mr. Nagle will lend us his talents; in fact I would be glad if he would undertake the direction."

Mr. Nagle was enchanted. Would help in any way that her ladyship thought necessary.

"And your daughter—I don't know what to say, or how to ask her, unless, indeed, Alfred can persuade her."

"Don't let your ladyship be disturbed," said Mr. Nagle, who had latterly assumed quite a free and familiar manner that contrasted oddly with his former obsequiousness. "Here, Corinna——"

"Hush," said Mr. Doughty. "All this only worries her. You cannot force a high spirit to go through such humiliations."

Mr. Duke and Corinna had meantime again come over.

"Humiliation," said he, "for Miss Corinna Nagle. Who wishes to humiliate her, pray? What strange ideas Mr. Doughty has."

"How ridiculously you talk, Alfred," said his mother. "I was only hoping that Miss Nagle would sing at our party."

"Which Mr. Doughty thinks would be humiliation, I see."

"Don't misinterpret what I said," replied the other, his voice slightly trembling. "Perhaps we might have meant that you once thought it a humiliation to sing at Mr. Nagle's. The malicious in this place may have put that very construction on your refusal. It had all the look of it."

The malicious, too, looking at the almost vehement tone with which this speech was delivered, might have assumed that he entertained the bitterest dislike to the man to whom his words were addressed. Alfred Duke, though ordinarily considered a "cool hand," was much taken back, and a mortified look came into his face. "Corinna looked at the speaker with something like indignation."

"Mr. Duke hardly deserved that; it was not his fault if he could not keep his engagement," she said, quietly.

This was all; but the speech had a curious effect on those listening. Over Mr. Doughty's face passed an expression of pain and positive anguish; over that of Lady Duke one of disturbance and hostility; over that of Mr. Alfred one of triumph. In short, it was the presence of jealousy, dislike, and the feeling of success.

#### CHAPTER XV. MR. DOUGHTY'S CONCERT.

A PARTY of singers were being led round the country by a musical "farmer," and posters were on the dead and living walls of Brickford. There was Signora Scampini, of the Italian Opera; Mr. Boomersong, modestly described as "the greatest of English barytones;" a young lady who brought round a couple of what are called "royalty songs," Patty so Shy, and Half My Heart, both by Blue Bell, whose fame in fitting such trifles had travelled through the length and breadth of the land; Herr Boralowski, the famous 'cello player; Monsieur Piquette, the no less famous violinist; and Mr. Ryder Baker, as accompanist, conductor, and soloist. They were to give two grand concerts of vocal and instrumental music. But more interesting was the news that the whole party was to attend at a soirée given, regardless of expense, by

Mr. Doughty, and where, of course, Miss Corinna was to be prima donna. Mr. Nagle, indeed, triumphantly told his friends that the whole was for Corinna's glory; that Jenkinson, the famous opera house manager, was coming down on a visit to Mr. Doughty, and was to pronounce on her merits as a singer. The wealthy amateur was now in such a position, that any reasonable wish of his was certain to be attended to, so that the realisation of the early dream of Mr. Nagle—his daughter figuring in that brilliant and blissful scene as Signora Naglioni—did not seem so far off after all. The Nagles had fallen, not, indeed, on their feet, as the people round them were fond of saying, but on a vast expanse of ottomans and down cushions. The preparations seemed to be under the sole direction of Mr. Nagle, and everything of the handsomest and richest was being ordered in. Workmen were seen covering in a portion of the garden, which was to be fitted up with rich furniture and costly shrubs got down from Covent Garden; in short, "everything that money could do"—which, after all, often does very little, as regards taste and effect—was done.

The musical farmer and his musical farm stock had already arrived, and the night for Mr. Doughty's entertainment had come round. Every one of position in Brickford had been asked. Lady Duke had constituted herself a sort of Almack's patroness of the affair, and had even proposed to officiate as hostess, a proposal which, to her surprise, was coldly declined. But her daughter Emmeline had been sent home from the finishing school, "finished" in due time. She was a handsome, showy-looking, large-eyed girl, not in the least shy, yet not bold, but with a comfortable absence of delicacy which would make her persevere in her ends, matrimonial or otherwise, without being in the least daunted by a rebuff, or, indeed, seeming to be conscious of one. Her mother and herself, though their official services in reception of the guests had been declined, had, with a force not to be resisted, contrived to introduce themselves on the premises during the daytime as decorators and arrangers. Their good offices, not to be avoided by anything short of direct expulsion, had been indifferently accepted by Mr. Doughty, though both declared that Mr. Doughty "must leave everything to them," and concentrate all his thoughts and exertions on the musical department. But Lady Duke and her daughter saw, with a certain ruefulness, that the whole festival was in honour of the

enchancing Corinna, and a certain instinct warned them that on that night some final and decisive step would be taken which might be fatal to their cherished designs. And what chiefly disturbed Lady Duke was the suddenly suspicious manner of Mr. Nagle, who had grown curt and blunt in his manner, and made several attempts to dislodge her from the premises.

Lady Duke, when she came down from dressing, was thoughtful, and felt there was a great responsibility on her. She found her son waiting, and she noticed he was a little nervous and excited. "This is going to be a great night," she said. "Mark my words, Alfred, Brickford will have something to gossip about to-morrow."

The young man understood her, and asked her, eagerly: "What do you know? Did you hear anything?"

"Oh, I had my eyes and ears open all the day. Those Nagles are very clever, very—regular adventurers; not, of course, your Corinna. But, in her innocent guilty way, she has led on the old fellow in excellent style."

"You don't understand, mother," he said, with an air of superiority. "I know her better than you. Her father forces her to do all that——"

"What, after being in the man's house morning, noon, and night, strumming away at his piano with his fiddlers! No, no. There is no forcing her into it. And, indeed, a girl of her sort is not to be blamed. She must make the best of such a fine chance."

"I tell you," said the son, "you are quite wrong. She would not look at Old Doughty."

"And I tell you, you don't know the world."

The carriage was announced, and the party went down-stairs. On the road Mr. Duke was silent; like all men, he was overstocked with vanity, and would really have sacrificed anything to prove that he was irresistible *de par l'amour*. No one knew this better than his worldly parent, who, for that night at least, had determined to play a rather risky game. So convinced was she that Mr. Doughty would propose that night to Corinna, and be accepted, that she had resolved on the desperate extremity of interposing her own son as a barrier, trusting to her ingenuity to rescue him later.

The rooms at Mr. Doughty's presented the most brilliant appearance. They overflowed with the "cream of the cream," such as it was, of Brickford. The large

music-room had been laid out with rows upon rows of chairs, filled with the wealth, and fashion, and beauty of the place. There was abundance of the first, not much of the second, and scarcely any of the third. The platform was framed in a perfect garden of shrubs and flowers, and the music seemed to issue from a sort of bower. Every one agreed that the whole was done magnificently, and in perfect taste. But Old Doughty was now boiled young again in a golden pot, and taste, and gallantry, and magnificence, as we know, are natural accompaniments of youth.

But they saw his quiet, thoughtful face lit up with the brightness of happiness as he led Corinna to the place of honour at the top of the room. There was a pride, an exultation in his eyes, and some ladies vowed he looked positively handsome, though "candidates," as they might be called, looked grim, and wondered "at the boldness of some people." Who could submit to be led up in such a style, before all that crowd? Certainly on that night the heroine looked a perfect princess, and Mr. Duke, surveying her progress, watching from afar off her flushed cheek and the pride of her cavalier, bit his glove and stamped his foot impatiently.

The people about, who knew him by sight as well as they did the market cross, were looking round with curiosity, and, as he fancied, with enjoyment, to see "how he took it." This was infinitely mortifying and irritating. But the spectacle of Corinna, thus followed with admiration and envy, led up by her devoted admirer, to be dazzled by such homage, with all the splendours of wealth which were about to be laid at her feet, was almost too much for him. He was not a profound analyst of his own emotions, or, indeed, of emotions in general, and he set this feeling down to deep passion, and perhaps to jealousy. But the supremacy of his rival which amused, and was seen by, that large assemblage, was what really disturbed him.

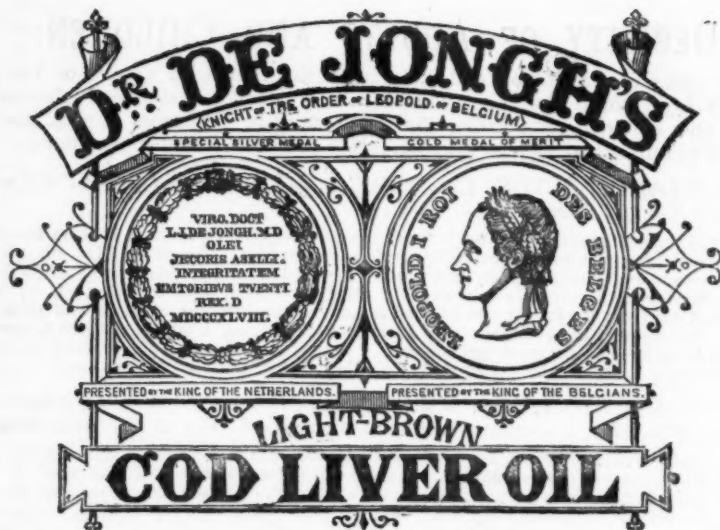
The "Squallinis"—so used Mr. Nagle to contemptuously describe the ladies and gentlemen of his own profession of the "assoluta" class—had done their work. The Italian signora had voiced a very difficult medley of "runs," trills, vocal leaps, which had about the same relation to true music as the steps of a prize clog-dancer have to the performance of a Cerito, when the turn of Corinna arrived. She came for-

ward as composed as the Italian, but with a grace and dignity foreign to the nature of that artist. Her beautiful and classical face was lit up with a true inspiration, an expression very different from that of the artificial gymnast who had preceded her. But what a flutter went round the audience when the spare figure of Mr. Doughty was seen seated at the pianoforte, and his delicate fingers began the sad symphony of the solemn strain in Orfeo. Then her full rich voice, charged with feeling and passion, was lifted up and floated down in melodious waves to the end of the room, making even unmusical senses vibrate with a strange sense. There was the tenderest grief and sense of bereavement, and a wonderful dramatic feeling. The whole scene came before them, without scenery or stage; the whole story was told by the noble music alone. The Italian signora, listening with surprise, was biting her lips with a spiteful expression. When it was over, and the last melodious tones had died away, a burst of applause spread in waves over the room. Corinna stood there a queen, an empress, as indeed she might have been for that timid adorer who was gazing on her with reverence and rapture. What did genteel Brickford think now after this recognition and association in public? "Opera house" Jenkinson, as he was called, was seen to leap forward enthusiastically, and appeared to stream compliments.

The next piece being a serious task, a heavy Mozart business—so many square feet of earth to be dug out within half an hour or so with musical spades and shovels—he found his way to Corinna's side, and after a whisper, led her away out of that crowded room to one of those improvised greenhouses where were scattered various pairs and parties for whom the music of their own discourse had a greater charm than the common crotchets and quavers. The Doughty eyes, though fixed on the Mozartian notes, strayed uneasily in the direction of the two departing figures. All through the easy progress of the allegro, the heavy ploughed field of the adagio, and the pleasant asphalt of the presto, they were absent. Then followed the barytone's ditty, which covered a good deal of space, but they did not return. Anxious eyes looked towards the door; and at last the audience saw Mr. Doughty leaving the room.

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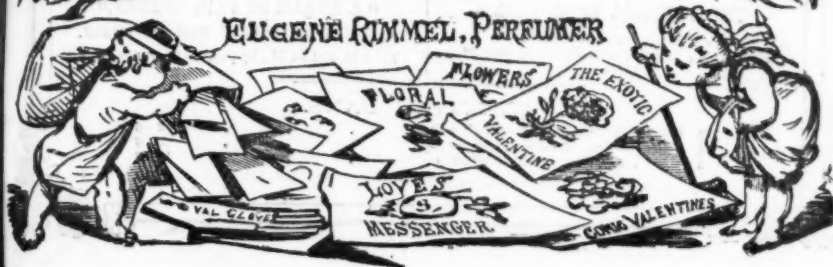
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# "THE DAY OF REST."

*On the 1st of JANUARY, 1873, will be published,*

NUMBER I.

OF

# THE DAY OF REST,

Price ONE PENNY a Week,

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ILLUSTRATED BY THE BEST ARTISTS.

To whom is the Day of Rest not welcome? Like the rain from Heaven which falls upon the just and the unjust alike, it comes with an impartial embrace and a smile of equal sweetness to him who believes much, and him who believes little. And few, we may feel sure, are the kindly and trustful souls that it does not leave better than it found them. On the other hand, "Sabbathless Satan" is the phrase in which the most serious of modern humourists thought he might sum up all his ideas of misery and malignity at once. If he had lived till now, when the pace of life is so fast, and the whirr of the wheels so loud in the ear, he would have used that phrase with the more pungent emphasis. Shorten hours of labour as we may, and they will bear a good deal of shortening, we shall still have cause to guard and keep our Holy Day. Let us make it as much sweeter and brighter, and more inclusive, as the Love of God who hallowed it, will permit us; but let us keep it. That Love is wider than we know, and we hope every pen that writes in our pages will trust it to the full.

We lay special stress upon one point, namely, that our pages shall be *inviting*—full of repose and delight. We shall hope to keep well in sight of the Land of Beulah and the Delectable Mountains. Giant Despair we will have none of, and Mr. Great-heart and Faithful and Hopeful shall be at hand to cheer up Mr. Ready-to-halt, or to see the women and children along the doubtful places—which latter, however, we shall prefer to skirt, or wholly to shun.

Rest, Love, Joy—these are three of the sweetest words known to mortal or immortal lips, and we would inscribe them on our gates in every form and hue of invitation. These are not graces in themselves, however, but only as they are grafted on the stem of faith, zeal, self-abasement, and diligence. "The first grace is faith, the last is love; first comes zeal, afterwards comes loving kindness; first comes humiliation, then comes peace; first comes diligence, then comes resignation." May it be our blessedness then, as years go on, to help to mature all graces;—fearing and trembling, watching and repenting, because Christ is coming; joyful, thankful, and careless of the future, because Christ is come.

If we cannot promise to find or make a Sanctuary or Garden of the Soul, into which men may retire at will, on this "day of all the days the best," we yet hope to be able to do good service, in the way of helping to deepen the spiritual life, —which may be taken as the special purpose of our Magazine. The poor and lowly will have provision made for them in Narrative, and Homily, and Story, and Song, and Parable, and Picture; and as for the holy and humble of heart, who, like the Cherubim, see God and worship, we hope to learn much from them, and to give them something which they will prize in return. All classes will be kept in view, so that, as far as the "DAY OF REST" is concerned, a general truce may be called to the schemes which fill up the hopes, and fears, and wishes of everyday life; and the tide of worldliness be so stemmed, that the soul may have time and opportunity to meditate on the things which are above the world, and beyond the boundaries of space.

In one word, it shall be our endeavour to remove the false views of things which hold men in bondage, compelling them to give to God their fear, and to Mammon their love; to help men to rise to the stature of the fulness of Christ; and generally to throw open all the avenues of the soul, through which the breath and light of heaven may come to us.

But enough of explanation. Promise in advance as we might, we know that it would still require to be left to the "DAY OF REST" itself to make friends or to lose them. Let us take leave then to refer the reader at once to the First Number, published on 1st January, 1873.

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*Among the leading contributions to the First Year's Issue of*

# THE DAY OF REST

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**WORDS FOR THE DAY.** By C. J. VAUGHAN, D.D. *Master of the Temple.*

II.

**LABOURS OF LOVE.** Being further accounts of what is being done by Dr. WICHERN and others. By the REV. W. FLEMING STEVENSON, Author of "Praying and Working."

III.

**OCCASIONAL PAPERS.** By the REV. THOMAS BINNEY.

IV.

**SUNDAYS IN MY LIFE.** By the Author of "Episodes in an Obscure Life."

V.

**SONGS OF REST.** By GEORGE MAC DONALD.

VI.

**TO ROME AND BACK.** A Narrative of Personal Experience. By ONE WHO HAS MADE THE JOURNEY.

\*.\* The late Dr. NORMAN MACLEOD, during the last few months of his life, frequently urged the preparation of a series of Popular Papers, by a thoroughly competent person, on the Church of Rome as it really is to-day. "TO ROME AND BACK" is the result of his suggestion.

VII.

**THE BATTLE OF THE POOR.** Sketches from Courts and Alleys. By HESBA STRETTON, Author of "Jessica's First Prayer," and "Little Meg's Children."

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